



October 23, 2006

Chairman Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate  
Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Robert McDowell  
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 06-74 / Support for AT&T/BellSouth Merger

Dear Commissioners:

I write in support of the AT&T/BellSouth merger and on behalf of Claflin University. With an enrollment of approximately 1,800 students from every region of the United States and 14 countries, Claflin University continues to be recognized as one of the leading institutions of higher education in the southeast. In its 2007 special edition, *U.S. News and World Report on America's Best Colleges* ranks Claflin University in the **Top Tier** for the ninth consecutive year among Comprehensive Colleges in the South for students working toward bachelor's degrees.

As President of Claflin University, I am committed to growing the educational opportunities, future career prospects, and economic prosperity of our students. This is why I write to ask for your swift approval of the AT&T/BellSouth merger.

The merger will deliver new and innovative broadband technologies that will improve the education of our young people, especially African-Americans and those in lower-income and rural areas of South Carolina.

From distance learning to cutting-edge, in-classroom tools, our students and educators are already learning how technology can open new doors. Yet, we have barely begun to scratch the surface of the innovations in education that communications technology can make available to us. AT&T and BellSouth have proposed a very meaningful set of post-merger conditions that include a promise to bring *affordable* and *universal*

broadband coverage to South Carolina's parents and students. Specifically, AT&T and BellSouth have offered:

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- A \$10 monthly residential broadband Internet service offering;
- A pledge to make available broadband Internet access to *all* residential living units in the AT&T/BellSouth service territory, including rural America and lower income housing units.

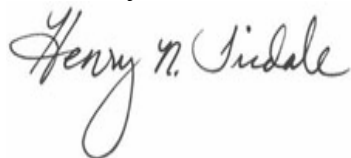
I believe that Claflin University and our minority students, many of whom come from lower income families and rural areas, will reap greater benefit than most from these broadband commitments, which include:

- Speeding the deployment of exciting new broadband-based technologies and other promising innovations to our nation's schools, libraries and to students' homes.
- Providing new economic growth and jobs for our young people.
- Enhancing *distance learning* capabilities, such as offering students greater access to advanced placement and other courses and fields of study, providing new educational tools for students and others with disabilities, and providing new cost-effective learning tools that will enhance America's global competitiveness.

Given the positive impact these commitments will bring to our educational system and young people, I urge you to approve the AT&T/BellSouth merger at the earliest possible date.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry N. Tisdale". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Henry N. Tisdale  
President

*400 Magnolia Street, Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115*  
*A University of The United Methodist Church*